



**A Message  
From  
The  
Secretary**

Happy New Year!

Another legislative session is upon us. We are currently finalizing several health and environmental issues for consideration and the FY 2007 budget. This month KDHE will publish a comprehensive annual report for the first time in many years. We are excited to bring you this resource, which will provide an overview of the many programs in our agency, including budget and legislative overviews and contact information. It will be available on our Web site and in hard copy by the end of January. We look forward to receiving your feedback.

With the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006, Kansas began to see an increase in influenza activity, as is the trend. If you haven't received a flu shot, it is still not too late to get one. Flu can last into early spring, so getting a shot now will still provide you with many months of protection. In addition to a flu shot, it's also important to wash your hands frequently to prevent spread of influenza, cover your cough, and stay home when you're sick.

Kansas has also seen a tremendous increase in whooping cough or pertussis cases in recent months with more than 500 cases in 2005, compared to 250 in 2004 and less than 50 in years prior. This illness is particularly dangerous for infants under age one. New vaccines made available for older children and adults are expected to help reduce the number of cases and reduce the likelihood of them bringing home pertussis to an infant who may not have had the full series of vaccinations yet.

Moving into the new year many of us think about resolutions, and I'd like to encourage you to consider these three: making healthier choices for yourself, protective choices for your environment and safer choices for your family. We encourage you to choose healthier foods, get more physically active, and eliminate your use of tobacco products. We encourage you to recycle and compost and look for ways to protect the water in your environment. And finally we encourage you to be ready for natural or manmade disasters including pandemic flu or bio/chemical terrorism, by having enough food, water, prescriptions, and other necessities on hand to last for several days.

These are all actions we can take in the new year that will result in improvements for all of us and can have a lasting impact. Let's make every effort to make this year an even better one than last.

I'd like to take a moment to thank all of the KDHE staff who worked so hard to make 2005 a success. We have a great team of individuals who are concerned about making Kansas a better place to live, work and raise a family, and that shows in their contributions every day at KDHE. Thank you!

Be well,